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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the conflict created by two trends in education--the push for a multicultural curriculum and for accountability. Proponents of multicultural education argue that national standardized tests fail to tap diverse students' knowledge and problem-solving abilities. Approaches for reframing the paradox--diverse assessment, alternative assessment, feminist assessment, and emancipatory theory--are presented. A conclusion is that the paradox can possibly be minimized if both positions broaden the boundaries of acceptable solutions. For those who believe strongly in accountability, it is suggested that alternative means can be utilized without seriously jeopardizing the process or outcome. Alternative forms of assessment can have value in ascertaining student learning and providing yardsticks. Moreover, not only the "how" of assessment can be questioned, but the "why" and the "what." For those who believe strongly in the multicultural curriculum, it is suggested that serious discussion should occur about what should be the constants in the curriculum of American schools. (LMI)

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A CRITIQUE OF APPROACHES FOR REFRAMING THE PARADOX BETWEEN THE MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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A Critique of Approaches for Reframing the Paradox Between the Multicultural Curriculum and Accountability

By

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I. Introduction

In this paper, we will focus on two educational trends that have gained increasing importance as possible solutions to the current crisis in American education. One of these trends takes into account the changing demographic patterns in the U.S. It focuses on the realization that the "so-called" minority groups will soon be the majority. It takes into account the issues of race, ethnicity, social class, gender and other forms of difference. Many of the proponents of this perspective have paid particular attention to the curriculum. They have advocated a multicultural curriculum that will incorporate many forms of difference and will give students an understanding and appreciation for diversity. These proponents believe that students will be able to learn more when they study a meaningful curriculum that reflects their own backgrounds as well as the backgrounds of others.

Another trend that has become stronger over time has been that of accountability. This trend began with the taxpayer

revolt in the late 1970's which made it clear that education must produce results. Taxpayers wanted their money's worth and the focus of this trend rests heavily on assessment rather than on curriculum development. Accountability is not seen as the monitoring of students' work towards the improvement of instruction; rather it is seen as an end product that can demonstrate how well or how poorly American children do on standardized tests. In effect, the hope is that these standardized tests will drive the curriculum and determine what students should study and know.

Since we and many other educators believe that curriculum, instruction and assessment should be complementary, it stands to reason that these two trends or solutions to the same perceived problem should work in tandem. Unfortunately, we are convinced that the two positions mentioned above, if carried to their logical extremes as they are currently being framed by their strongest proponents, are essentially contradictory.

The positions are contradictory because proponents of the multicultural curriculum tend to believe that students are different in how they learn, how they should be taught and how they should be tested. Therefore, for them, standardized tests will not suffice, particularly nationally standardized tests. Alternative forms of assessment are needed to tap diverse students' knowledge and problem solving abilities. Those who focus on accountability, while they may acknowledge some diversity in the kinds of assessment approaches used, ultimately

believe that performance on standardized tests is important in determining the success or failure of a student. No narrative explanation of how a student is doing will suffice.

Hence, it seems to us that there are contradictory positions here that can push or pull educators in different directions making it difficult for them to really focus on students and their needs. More importantly, we believe that the divisiveness inherent in attempting to resolve these two opposing positions has the potential to create serious difficulties for American schools - - the central arena in which this conflict is being fought. Our purpose in this paper is to discuss and analyze these two trends, and then to present several options which we believe have the potential of resolving the paradox inherent in these two contradictory positions.

We will organize our paper around three major themes. First, we will discuss the multicultural curriculum-- how it is defined; what its advocates want it to do; what issues it presents for American schools. Using the work of Sleeter and Grant (1989), Banks (1991), Tetreault (1989) and others, we will review the various models and approaches which have attempted to infuse issues of race, gender, ethnicity and social class into the curriculum. As Banks has noted, most of the attempts to integrate these aspects of diversity into the school curriculum are at a fairly low level of sophistication and development. How can the necessary climate for change be produced where diversity is not only recognized but valued? What successful models are

available that can be implemented? What problems are likely to be encountered?

We will then turn our attention to the general issue of accountability and the specific issue of national standardized tests as the vehicle to achieve this accountability. We will present the arguments which have been forwarded by the proponents of accountability to justify the development of national standards. As we have argued elsewhere (Sewell, DuCette & Shapiro, 1991; DuCette, Shapiro and Sewell, 1992), national standards inevitably lead to national tests, and national tests inevitably lead to a national curriculum. What are the implications of this development? What position should educators take when confronted with the call for accountability?

For our third theme, we will present what we believe to be a number of approaches for reframing the paradox presented when we try to combine the multicultural curriculum with accountability. These approaches will be defined and discussed in some detail. They include: diverse assessment, alternative assessment, feminist assessment and emancipatory theory.

If we are to think seriously about curriculum and instruction from multicultural perspectives, ultimately we must deal with the assessment of what has been learned. In this paper, it is our intent to present four approaches to assessing what has been learned through the multicultural curriculum, critique each, and offer what we think are the best current approaches from our point of view. At the very least, we believe

that these approaches establish a framework within which the paradox between the multicultural curriculum and accountability can be discussed in the broader context of the national debate on educational reform.

II. The Multicultural Curriculum and American Schools

A. Towards a Definition of the Multicultural Curriculum

The call for a multicultural curriculum, one which attempts to reflect and incorporate the diverse elements of American society, presents both a unique challenge and a unique problem for American schools. While there are many definitions of the term "multicultural curriculum", we believe that the logic of multiculturalism requires a definition more inclusive than many currently in the literature. Banks (1991), for example, has developed an influential, four-phase model of multicultural curriculum development which discusses the movement from a Mainstream Centric Model to an Ethno-National Model. In his discussion, however, the term "cultural" is basically synonymous with "ethnicity". Tetreault (1989), on the other hand, has presented an equally valuable, five-phase model of curriculum development in women studies. While Tetreault focused on gender, Asante (1987) and Fordham (1988) chose to emphasize race. Asante turned to African culture in an attempt to forge a cultural identity and, in so doing, to help African-Americans develop pride in the cultural background of their race. Fordham, on the

other hand, focused on cultural extremes noting the differences between those who have a strong awareness of their race and those who do not. She categorized those in the latter category by the term, racelessness.

While we believe that it is an important step in multicultural awareness for Asante, Fordham, Tetreault and others to present models which tend to focus more heavily on a single dimension of diversity, we believe that in practice a true multicultural curriculum for American schools will inevitably lead to the broadest possible definition. It seems to us that the inclusion of any aspect of diversity in the curriculum (for example, racial issues) must lead to the inclusion of others. For this reason, we will define the multicultural curriculum as one which includes a range of racial, ethnic, gender and social class issues and even broaden the definition to include the areas of exceptionalities, sexual diversity and bilingualism. Using Banks' (1991) definition, a fully developed multicultural curriculum is one in which all historical and social events are viewed from the perspectives of as many diverse groups as possible. We will also borrow definitions of diversity, from such writers as Sleeter and Grant (1988), Giroux (1992) and Capper (1993), that emphasize the importance of a social constructionist approach to multiculturalism. This focus is on the importance of preparing educational administrators and teachers to not only exist in an environment which is increasingly pluralistic and diverse, but to actually thrive in

light of these demographic changes.

The proponents of the multicultural curriculum have argued that despite vast changes in American society, the schools still portray the "ideal" American in a fashion which has not significantly changed in 50 years. This concept is well captured in the following quote by Cushner, McClelland and Safford (1992):

> "Real Americans are white and they are adult; they are middle-class (or trying very hard to be); they go to church (often Protestant, but sometimes Catholic as well, although that is a bit suspicious); they are married (or aim to be) and they live in single-family houses (which they own, or are trying to); they work hard and stand on "their own two feet"; they wash themselves a good deal, and generally try to "smell good"; they are patriotic and honor the flag; they are heterosexual; they are often charitable, only expecting a certain amount of gratitude and a serious effort to "shape up" from those who are the objects of their charity; they eat well; they see that their children behave themselves" (p. 216).

The central issue underlying the call for a multicultural curriculum is that no single description of the "real American" is possible, and that American schools should stop trying to create one. It should be emphasized that this is not proposed as a cosmetic change. By moving away from a monocultural perspective in the curriculum, the proponents of multiculturalism believe that the needs of students who differ from the white, male, middle-class norm -- students whom the schools are largely failing -- will be better met.

B. Some Concerns About the Multicultural Curriculum

If, under a multicultural curriculum, the goal of the schools has ceased being to produce the prototypic "American", what, then, should the experience be which the schools are

providing? It can be argued that the answer to this question has been the central focus of American education throughout its history. The critical difference is that in today's discussion of this issue, the possibility has been raised that there is no single answer to this question.

According to some of its critics (Bloom, 1987; D'Sousa, 1991), the multicultural curriculum, with its emphasis on difference, has produced a potential crisis for American schools. With the decline in the belief in the American melting pot, each of the groups which comprise the American people has begun to demand that their unique values, history and viewpoint should be respected, studied and incorporated into the curriculum. Without a doubt, there are many positive outcomes to this movement--ethnic pride, a sense of community within groups which share a common culture, and a richer sense of heritage. The negative side of this movement, however, is that consensus about what America is and, more critically, what it should become, may be unattainable. As one of our mainstays in the popular culture, Time Magazine, in its July, 1991 issue, asks:

> "Put bluntly: Do Americans still have faith in the vision of their country as a cradle of individual rights and liberties, or must they relinquish these freedoms to further the goals of the ethnic and social groups to which they belong? Is America's social contract--a vision of self determination that continues to reverberate around the world--fatally tainted by its origins in Western European thought? What kind of people do Americans now think they are, and what will they tell their children about that?"

Critics of the multicultural curriculum contend that if the idea of a multicultural curriculum is carried to its logical

conclusion, the ultimate result may be a nation which has no unifying vision of itself, and has no common set of assumptions on which it may develop such a vision.

One of the major historical functions of schools has been to assimilate diverse group into the mainstream culture. This has usually meant that the curriculum, the teaching techniques and the methods of testing and assessment were identical (or at least very similar) for all students. The question posed by the demand for a multicultural curriculum is whether schools can be reconceptualized to represent and value diversity while at the same time maintaining their historical role of transmitting the dominant culture. This problems would be acute under any circumstance. It becomes almost unsolvable in light of the recent reform movements with their strident demands for accountability through the use of national tests.

III. Accountability and The New American Achievement Tests

Since the advent of "The Nation at Risk" report in 1983, there have been at least 57 national and organizational reports (Jackson, 1991) that followed. The majority of these reports have focused on accountability issues and schooling. To illustrate the focus on accountability, we turn to one of the newer and more publicized reports, America 2000 (Alexander and Bush, 1991). While there are many contradictions in America 2000, its strong belief in the power of accountability monitored through tests is unwavering. In fact, it can be argued that

accountability is the central concept in the document (the word "accountability" itself occurs 23 times, which is approximately once per page), and that the new American Achievement Tests are the major vehicle by which this accountability is to be attained. The evidence for this contention can be found throughout the Plan's various components: America 2000 calls for parents to have the option of sending their children to schools of their choice, and the way they will make this choice is to compare schools' test scores; America's students are to become competitive with students from other nations, and the way we will know that our students have achieved this "world class status" is to examine the test results from their schools; communities throughout the nation are to develop "report cards" on their schools, and the basic component of the grades for these report cards are the test results. These examples can be found on many of the pages of the document.

Since the new achievement tests are so central to America 2000, we think it is important to view them from a critical perspective and not to fall once again into the trap of accepting standardized tests as the ultimate measure of educational attainment. Haladyna, Nolen and Haas (1991) and other researchers, have indicated the surprising lack of criticism of tests of this kind:

> The coin of the realm in public education in the United States is the standardized achievement test score. This score is universally and uncritically accepted by the public and many educators as a valid measure of educational accomplishment....

We have examined the major arguments for and against these tests in other publications (Sewell, Shapiro and DuCette, 1991; Shapiro, DuCette and Sewell, 1992). Our two major concerns about the new tests can be summarized as follows: (1) No matter how valid or compelling the theoretical arguments seem to be for the tests, in practice they will not produce genuine accountability, nor will they improve real achievement or student learning in the schools; (2) The implementation of these tests will have a severe negative impact on those in our society who are already not well served by our educational system: minorities, the disabled, the poor, and all others who do not fit the white, middle class norms which seem to have informed America 2000.

Whatever else might be said about the New American Achievement Tests, which are so central to America 2000, one of the unquestionable outcomes of these tests will be, what we can only call, a national curriculum in the five areas to be tested (English, mathematics, science, history and geography). Proponents of the tests have argued that the tests will not be mandatory, will be able to reflect regional variations, and will not lead to a national curriculum. In America 2000, this issue is specifically raised by an unknown hypothetical questioner:

> Q. Do national tests mean a national curriculum?
>
> A. No- although surveys and polls indicate that most Americans have no objection to the idea of a national curriculum. The American Achievement Tests will examine the results of education. They have nothing to say about how these results are produced, what teachers do in class from one day to the next, what instructional materials are chosen, what lesson plans are followed. They should result in less regulation of the means of education- because they

focus exclusively on the ends. (p. 32)

As we have argued in our previous publications, none of these statements is credible. Anyone who can argue that focusing on the ends of education will have no effect on the means by which these ends are attained is either uninformed or naive. In fact, national standardized achievement tests will lead to a national curriculum, and a national curriculum will lead to more homogeneity in our schools.

There is also the implied argument in America 2000 that the use of the New American Achievement Tests, because they are objective, will have a positive effect in increasing the equality of educational opportunity in America. This is a seductive argument which has been put forward on several other occasions to justify the use of tests. According to this argument, testing has the salutary value of improving the opportunities of low income and minority children. Put another way, the use of tests, in theory, allows all students the same opportunity to achieve and do well in school.

Of all the arguments presented for the tests, this one is perhaps the most dangerous. It is our belief that differential socio-economic circumstances make standardized tests inherently biased against poor and/or minority children, and consequently that these tests negatively affect educational opportunities and success. The response to this criticism has usually focused on statistical or methodological principles. This is exactly the position which America 2000 takes, when, in responding to the

unknown questioner answers the charge of minority bias by saying:

> As for bias, the new tests will be screened to eliminate it. Bear in mind that minority parents also want to know how well their children-and the schools their children attend-are doing in relation to the national education goals and standards. (p. 32)

Our concern, however, is not that the tests will be flawed through poor test construction procedures, but rather that poor test performance is an almost certain outcome of poverty.

It must be remembered that the social reality into which a large percentage of America's children are born is vastly different from the one depicted in America 2000. It is a world in which lives are battered by poverty, social isolation and often racial and ethnic inequities. It is an environment where crime, drug addiction, pollution, abuse and other factors are daily realities. There are urban and rural communities where children attend school physically and psychologically unprepared to learn. There are social conditions in which the nutritional status and health care needs of the children adversely affect academic achievement (Sewell, 1990). It is a grim world far removed from the environment of America's privileged middle and upper class youth for whom America 2000 is intended and to whom it wishes to appeal. The negative impact of standardized tests on the poor and minorities, therefore, is not an issue of flawed test construction; rather, it is an issue of insensitive social policies which have permitted too many of America's youth to be raised in an environment where taking and doing well on a standardized test is often irrelevant and sometimes impossible.

The social issues that impact on many of America's children receive short shrift in America 2000 as does the concept of diversity. Sprinkled throughout the document are a few references to "at risk" children, and a few sections such as the one which indicates that communities should develop schools which meet their own individual needs, "as long as these schools meet the national educational goals" (p. 12). Primarily, however, America 2000 reflects a traditional, white, middle-class view of America. We could demonstrate this point in many ways, but it is perhaps best captured by a comment which occurs in the section titled Communities Where Learning Can Happen:

> It's time to end the "no fault" era of heedlessness and neglect, and as we shape tomorrow's schools, to rediscover the timeless values that are necessary for achievement" (p. 21).

While these "timeless values" are not explicitly defined, it is difficult to believe that they have anything in common with a multicultural curriculum.

Above all, what is missing in America 2000 is any discussion of the demographics of the 21st Century and the realization that many of our new workers will come from Latino, African-American, and Asian backgrounds in the U.S. of the future. What is also missing is the awareness that women will make up much of the workforce in this new era (Hodgkinson, 1992). The omissions of difference in the report indicate that the "timeless values" of a white, middle-class, male culture will remain in place as the curriculum in the 21st Century schools. The implicit message in America 2000 is that there is no place for a multicultural

curriculum and that the myth of the melting pot will carry on as an underlying concept of the curriculum of U.S. schools. In America 2000, this myth of the melting pot also enables the continued growth of accountability monitored by standardized tests. In this report, as in many of the past national reports, cultural or learning differences are ignored, and the underlying assumption is that all children can be taught and assessed in the same way.

IV. Restating the Paradox

We have presented a review of the two major themes in this paper - the multicultural curriculum and accountability - to highlight what we perceive as the paradox between them. We should stress that the major proponents of both positions have generally taken the public stance that their views and issues are reconcilable. In our opinion, however, both positions, taken to their logical conclusions, are essentially contradictory. Moreover, we believe that the forces at work in our society - forces which have generated these positions in the first place - not only can but will take them to their logical conclusions.

If the curriculum of American schools is to move away from a unified view, it is hard to believe that this process can be limited in any legitimate way. Our society is diverse in many ways, and all of these ways could become elements of the curriculum. Race, gender, social class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disabilities, different learning styles - all are

legitimate arenas for curricular development. If students learn better when the curriculum reflects their unique backgrounds, then a curriculum based on differences rather than on similarities is a curriculum with almost infinite variation. Moreover, such a curriculum will vary from one region of the country to another, from one school district to another, even from one class within a school to another class within the school.

From the perspective of those who believe in a multicultural curriculum, the above depiction of the implications of difference is neither negative nor frightening. For those who believe in accountability, however, the above must seem a nightmare. If national standards are to be developed, and if the attainment of these standards is to assessed in a way which is comparable for all students in all parts of the country, then inconsistent curricula are inherently indefensible. How can we produce a "report card for the nation" (to use a term in common use) if students are learning different material, at different times, and under different conditions? How can we produce numbers reflecting the attainment of national goals (for as a nation we have become so used to capturing reality by numbers that anything less would be considered a dereliction of duty) if there is no consistent core of information upon which the curriculum is based?

And so we believe that there is a paradox. Taken to their extremes, the multicultural curriculum and the accountability

movement leave American Schools with a difficult choice: a curriculum which is varied, complex and highly responsive to individual needs, but which may be fragmented and is surely unmanageable from a traditional assessment perspective; or, a curriculum which is consistent, uniform and easily assessed through standardized means, but which excludes a large and growing number of American students.

V. Four Assessment Approaches to Deal with the Paradox

In this section, we will focus on a **four options** to deal with the dilemma confronting educators in attempting to combine the two current trends.

A. Option One: Diverse Assessment

The least radical of the approaches, we will term **diverse assessment**. This approach accepts the premise that accountability is necessary, and assumes that standardized tests will inevitably comprise one element of this process. With diverse assessment, however, evaluation is broadened to include such alternate forms of measurement as performance assessment, portfolios and journals. This is a compromise position, and represents the common rhetoric, if not the reality, of many current discussions in this area.

This approach acknowledges that strides are being made in tests and measurements and that those who design standardized tests are beginning to take into account multiple intelligences as well as alternative forms of assessment. For example,

Sternberg (1990) and Gardner and Hatch (1989) are developing assessment devices focusing on multiple intelligences. Additionally, ETS and ACT are designing and pilot-testing standardized tests that focus on alternative forms of measurement. Of all the alternative forms, performance assessment appears to hold the promise of standardization more than any of the others. Thus, ETS and ACT seem to have made a commitment to redesigning tests with performance assessment in mind. In this way, standardized test designers hope to pacify critics who charge that standardized tests do not tap higher order thinking nor do they measure multiple intelligences.

B. Option Two: Alternative Assessment

Alternative assessment rather than conceding that accountability must be achieved, at least in part, through standardized tests, does not accept this position. Instead, it accepts the arguments and data which have demonstrated that standardized tests are inherently biased against minority students. This position requires that all forms of standardized assessment, including IQ tests, be eliminated from the assessment battery where high-stake decisions are made about students. The position accepts Wiggins'(1989) argument that educational evaluation should use standards, but that standardization, in its common psychometric sense, should be eliminated. It requires the setting of performance standards, but demands that these standards be assessed by non-traditional means. We have termed this position **alternative assessment.**

In our definition of alternative assessment, we move from the concept of standardization believing, as many do, that all students do not learn the same way and therefore should not be tested the same way. This option focuses on the use of performance assessment (but not in a standardized test format) (Hutchings, 1989); portfolios (Camp, 1990; Hutchings, 1990; Murphy and Smith, 1990); student journals, dialogic journals and teacher logs (Cohen, Landa & Tarule,1990); and other assessment approaches to determine what students are learning over time. It is open to multiple forms of assessment, including dynamic assessment (Sewell, 1987). Above all, it resists labelling a student based on a single test result.

C. Option Three: Feminist Assessment

The third approach is what is currently called **feminist assessment** (Shapiro, 1992). This approach arises out of the experiences of the National Assessment Team in developing an assessment plan for a national study of Women's Studies Programs. This project, termed The Courage to Question (McTighe Musil, 1992), evaluated seven Women's Studies Programs over a three year period of time. Our inclusion of this assessment model is based on the belief that Women's Studies programs have faced precisely the dilemma of accountability and diversity throughout their history and have developed a workable solution to the problem. As an academic area attempting to develop credibility, the directors and faculty of Women's Studies programs knew that they would need to meet traditional criteria for acceptability. In

addition, however, these programs are focused on diversity and on the assumption that there are legitimate alternate ways of acquiring knowledge and evaluating what has been learned.

Out of the need to meet the conflicting demands of accountability and diversity came a new form of assessment -- feminist assessment. As detailed by Shapiro (1993), feminist assessment:

(1) questions almost everything related to assessment;

(2) is student centered;

(3) is participatory;

(4) is deeply affected by its context or institutional culture;

(5) is decentered;

(6) is connected to its activist beliefs;

(7) should be compatible with it beliefs;

(8) is connected to the power of its pedagogy;

(9) is connected to its interdisciplinary scholarship and research approaches.

While some of the nine guiding principles may need to be modified to apply directly to public education, the experiences derived from the assessment of the Women's Studies programs should be useful for educators who are faced with the dilemma we have outlined in this paper. At the very least, we believe that these principles establish a framework within which the issues can be discussed in the broader context of the national debate on educational reform.

D. Option 4: Emancipatory Theory

A fourth approach to dealing with the paradox between the multicultural curriculum and the accountability movement can be found in the **emancipatory theory** of Giroux (1992) and others. Giroux advocates a public language that in many ways could replace the language of assessment. According to Giroux, "This language would refuse to reconcile schooling with forms of tracking, testing, and accountability that promote inequality by unconsciously ignoring cultural attributes of disadvantaged racial and class minorities" (p.8). Instead of framing the multicultural curriculum and accountability as a paradox, he chooses to develop open-ended, thoughtful questions that have implications for both the curriculum and for assessment. He asks: What kinds of citizens do we hope to produce through public education? What kind of society do we want to create?

Giroux's public language moves us away from a product model of assessment. He leads us towards a process of growth and a language of critique and possibilities (Sartre, 1963). His judgement of what students learn focuses on what kind of citizens they become over time. Ultimately, students would be expected to emerge as "critical citizens who are capable of exercising civic courage and the moral leadership necessary to promote and advance the language of democracy" (p.8). Such comprehensive, long-term outcomes are hard to assess. However, we would know that the goals had been achieved by the changes noted in our society. These changes would be demonstrated primarily through a grass-

roots youth movement towards equality and social justice.

VI. Summary of the Four Assessment Alternatives

The four assessment options that have just been presented focus attention on the fact that assessment is at the heart of the educational process. Whether we choose to admit it or not, assessment has frequently driven and continues to drive the curriculum. Any discussion of the multicultural curriculum, therefore, must also be a discussion of assessment.

In reviewing these options, it is evident that clear choices need to be made. It should be obvious from the presentation in this paper that our own choice would lead us away from the "tried and true" path of standardized tests, although combining these tests with alternative forms of assessment is less objectionable. If the perceived crisis in American education is generated from the sense that the academic performance of American students is deficient, the continued use of traditional testing practices will simply further document what we already know rather than promote and enhance achievement. A fundamental goal of the current reform movement in education is to improve the quality of students' academic performance. Assessment and testing should contribute to teachers' instructional strategies which are the *sine qua non* of the requirements associated with achievement. We now have the knowledge base, the technology and the vision to incorporate the demands of accountability with instructional

strategies in models of alternative assessment. Assessment conceptualized as a vehicle to enhance achievement rather than for providing data for comparative analysis, has the potential, via alternative assessment models, to resolve some of the paradox of the multicultural curriculum and accountability.

Quality instruction implies an understanding of what to teach, how to transmit knowledge, and a sound grasp of what students know. Thus, the goals of accountability are partially factored into the approaches associated with alternative assessment. But more importantly, alternative assessment can assess children's learning and knowledge even when the curriculum is richly enhanced by materials that reflect cultural compatibility with the issues of race, social-class and gender. In contrast, standardized measures are unlikely to generate information on students' problem solving skills, a meaningful understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and the optimal conditions under which learning occurs. Gathering data on what students know through the static objective measures of standardized tests will neither be enlightening nor valuable for the teaching/learning process. If, then, we stay with the first option, we will remain with a similar measurement program to our current one with few real changes.

Another approach is to modify assessment through using only alternative forms. To reiterate, while there are clear gains from a multicultural perspective from this choice, there is the potential problem of the assessment process being unable to

meet some of the legitimate needs for accountability. Moreover, we know that there are already attempts to standardize alternative assessment and thereby give it the properties of traditional tests. This, we believe, will destroy the integrity of this concept. At the present time, alternative assessment takes into account that all students do not learn the same way and attempts to meet those needs. Will it do the same when a number such as a 62.8% or a 75.3% is given to a portfolio?

Beyond alternative assessment, we have the option to question. Through The Courage to Question, with its nine guiding principles, the way is open to begin to ask appropriate questions that deal with both accountability and the multicultural curriculum. Such questions might include: Can educators continue to use standardized test performance results as the major determinant of a student's success? Do such results really demonstrate what a student has learned over time? What is the link between content, pedagogy and assessment? How should one assess student learning of the multicultural curriculum? Who should determine the approach or approaches to assessment used in U.S. schools -- educators, legislators, taxpayers, psychometricians?

Another approach that also emphasizes questioning is that of emancipatory theory. Citizenship is at the center of this model and not only the individual student but her or his role in society must be queried. With this approach, the student, the school as well as society itself will be evaluated.

Although we have presented these options as separate and discrete, there are many overlaps in these four approaches and there is no need to make a decision to use only one of the models. For example, in feminist assessment there is a close link to feminist scholarship and research. In both feminist scholarship and research, there is an emphasis on injustice in society, the development of altruism and a stress on activism. This is also the case in emancipatory theory.

VII. Conclusion

Our goal in this paper was to begin a discussion of the potential conflicts we perceive between the two powerful forces of multiculturalism and accountability. There is no question that both sides have convincing and articulate proponents, and that both issues can claim legitimacy as the basis for educational reform. We hope that we have demonstrated that it will be difficult if not impossible to meet both these sets of demands, or at least to do so in an intellectually honest manner.

One of the basic arguments that we have attempted to make throughout this paper is that the paradox we perceive can possibly be minimized if both positions broaden the boundaries of acceptable solutions. For those who believe strongly in accountability, we have suggested that alternative means of producing this accountability can be utilized without seriously jeopardizing the process or the outcome. Alternative forms of assessment can have value in ascertaining student learning, and

can provide feedback to those who want "yardsticks" on which to measure the nation's educational progress. Moreover, we have suggested that not only the "how" of assessment can be questioned, we can also question the "why" and the "what". What should we measure? Why are we doing this? Who is gaining from the assessment and to what uses will this assessment be put?

For those who believe strongly in the multicultural curriculum, we suggest that serious discussion needs to take place about what should be the constants in the curriculum of American schools. What are those core elements that every student needs to know? What are the elements of the culture that are common? How can these common elements be taught in a manner that meets individual needs? We have found it interesting in our own institution to ask questions such as: "Should all students in American schools know about Thomas Jefferson?" Then, assuming that the answer to this question is yes, how and what do we teach about Thomas Jefferson if we are instructing a totally diverse (meaning that all elements of American society are represented) class of 6th graders? Should we focus on Jefferson as the author of the Declaration of Independence? Or, should we discuss the paradox in Jefferson's own life time? That discussion could be framed around Jefferson's support of what appeared to be broad-based equality, while in keeping with his era, he actually endorsed the equality of male property owners and he continued to be a slave owner himself.

As is true for so many seemingly intractable problems,

resolutions become possible when both sides perceive and begin to acknowledge the issues of the other. We have attempted in this paper to present the issues of accountability and multiculturalism in a way that heightens the potential conflicts we perceive between them. Perhaps we have overstated the case; it is possible that these two forces are not as mutually exclusive as we perceive. But even if this is true, we still believe that there is a need for educators to take the lead in this discussion and to raise the salient questions, frame the debate and discussion, and ultimately, select the best possible solutions to the paradox between the multicultural curriculum and accountability.

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